

Kristin Rawcliffe
Portrait in Oils Zoom Demonstration
Friday 13th August 2021

Kristin began by introducing herself. She is an artist who lives in Yateley. She is currently doing an MA in Fine Art at Reading University. She has exhibited in a variety of venues including the Mall Galleries 'Best of British Art' and ING Discerning Eye 2020.

This demonstration was going to be a challenge because Kristin will be working 'alla prima', Alla prima is an Italian phrase that means '**at first attempt**'. It refers to a wet-on-wet approach whereby wet paint is applied to previous layers of still-wet paint, often in a single sitting.



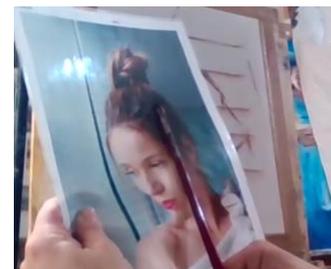
She is going to be working on Arches oil paper. She likes to prepare the paper with a mixture of half and half turps and linseed oil to which she adds a tiny amount of black paint to create a pale grey base. She uses Jacksons Shellsol T because it has no smell and is not expensive.

Kristin chose this photo reference for her demonstration because she knows from experience that artists find a semi profile difficult especially when the face is looking slightly down. She had laminated the reference photo so that she could demonstrate her thinking by drawing the lines on the photograph and then transposing them to the painting.



She begins by dividing the face looking at the ratios of facial features, hairline, nose, lips. She then marks in the basic outlines constantly checking the angles using her paintbrush to determine the line of the shadow on the face, for

instance, before drawing it on to the page. This is called triangulation. She finds it a better method of painting a portrait while some artists prefer using the grid method.



This first stage can go wrong but it will be constantly checked and can be corrected when it comes to blocking in the colour. Kristin likes to outline the socket of the eye where she looks for the shadow shapes formed by the shape of the face. Remember the ear is located differently here because the face is tilted down. The bottom of the ear would usually align with the bottom of the nose but in this case, it is higher, from her eyebrow to halfway up her cheek.

The next stage was to block in working from dark cool to the lightest warm. Kristin uses a form of the Zorn Palette. The **Zorn palette** refers to a palette of colours attributed to the great Swedish artist, Anders Zorn (18 February 1860 – 22 August 1920). It consists of just four colours being yellow ochre, ivory black, vermilion and titanium white. Cadmium red light is commonly used in place of vermilion by modern day artists.



Kristin likes Indian yellow rather than yellow ochre. She will also be using ultra marine blue. Turquoise is another colour she really likes and so she has this colour on her palette too. The limited palette reduces the choices to be made to one of four tones. It is a good idea to develop what is around the face too as the background affects the painting. Black, ultra marine, yellow and white creates a dark turquoise blue that will make the background colour.

The paint brushes Kristin uses are square synthetic brushes that seem to work well on this Arches oil paper. The lightest areas are on her cheek, forehead, and the bridge of her nose. Next for her hair. To make the brown colour Kristin mixed black, red and Indian yellow. People often over think the hair. It is really a mass of tones so Kristin will paint it in blocks.



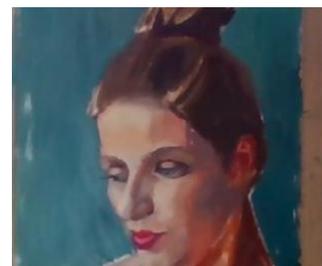
The model is wearing quite a lot of make-up and has very red lips. She used alizarin crimson darkened with a little blue for the bottom lip then adding some cadmium red to make it zing a little and white for the highlights on the top lip.



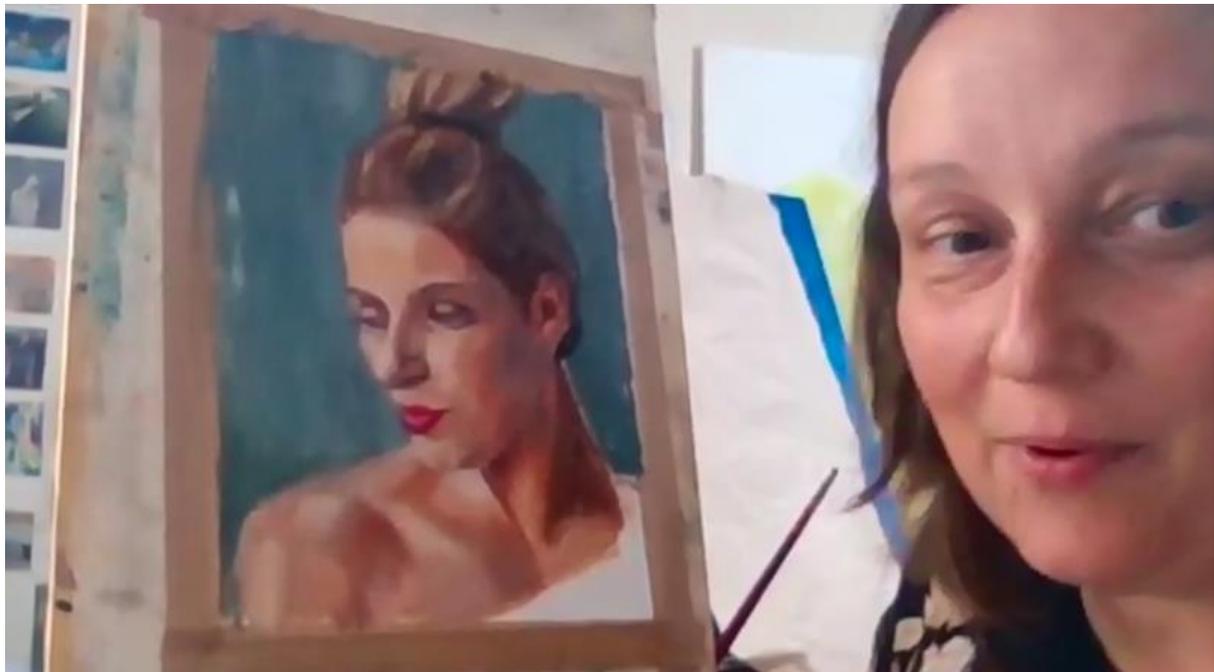
Using the same four tones Kristin returned to her shoulders and neck. It is a good idea to keep working on the whole painting. With oils the paint remains live for a few days. This would not be true if it were being painted in acrylics. If using acrylic paints, it can help to use a retardant.

After the break it was time to work on some of the details and for this Kristin uses smaller synthetic Scroll brushes. She begins by tackling the eye which is at a difficult angle to get the position of the pupil and iris. She softened the edges on the nose working dark into light and then painted the eye on the far side of the face. The philtrum under the nose should be hinted at rather than made too distinct.

Kristin finds that working on paper rather than canvas means the paint sinks in and can be easily blended. Hairlines are another area where it helps to avoid a strong line. When painting the ear, she paints the dark first then the light. She likes to name the shapes she sees. To her mind there is a Y in the upper part.



At this point Kristin began to review what she had painted, she added highlights in the hair, worked a little on the jaw line and brought the background down to the shoulder. She was not going to be able to finish the painting as the session was coming to a close, but it had been fascinating to watch how quickly she developed a portrait in oil over a period of just a couple of hours.



Kristin is going to be an Artist in Residence at a school next term, but she did say she may be running classes in the future too.

If you are interested in taking classes with Kristin, she can be contacted by email at: hello@kristinrawcliffe.co.uk

For more information this is her website: <https://www.kristinrawcliffe.co.uk>.

She is also on Instagram at: <https://www.instagram.com/kristinrawcliffe/>

This was the first Zoom demonstration that Frimley & Camberley Society of Arts has had where members were asked to make a £5.00 payment to attend. It was pleasing to have 26 people subscribe and the feedback from members has been very positive.

